

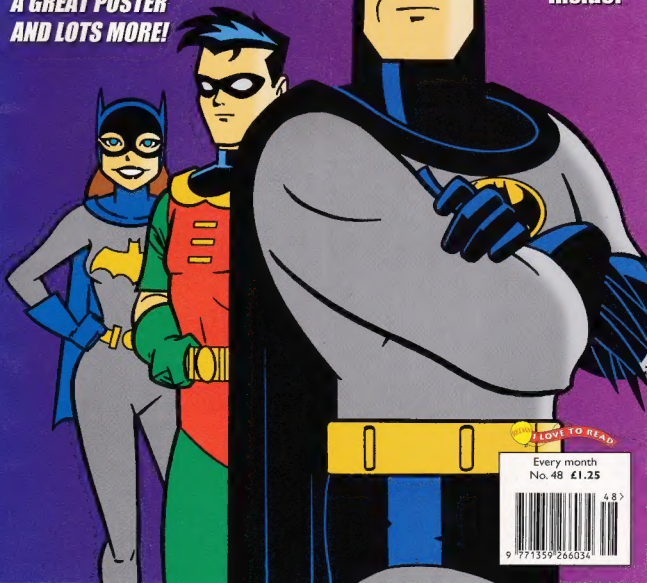
FANTASTIC GIFT FOR YOU! SUPER HEROES GALORE!

BATMAN **AND** **SUPERMAN**

**FILLED WITH ACTION-PACKED
STORIES, ACTIVITIES,
A GREAT POSTER
AND LOTS MORE!**

With

inside!

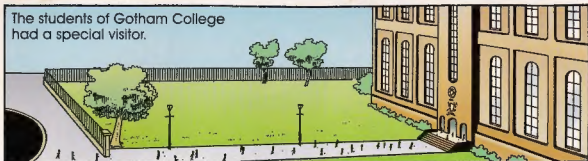


 **I LOVE TO READ**

Every month
No. 48 £1.25



The students of Gotham College had a special visitor.



Commissioner James Gordon had come to give a lecture on crime prevention.

...THE POLICE FORCE DOES ALL IT CAN TO STOP CRIME IN GOTHAM.

BATMAN

IN **GOOD CITIZENS**

BUT WE ALWAYS APPRECIATE THE ALERTNESS AND COMMON SENSE OF GOOD CITIZENS.

In the student audience were Dick Grayson and the commissioner's daughter, Barbara Gordon.



Suddenly the lecture was interrupted by an alarm bell...

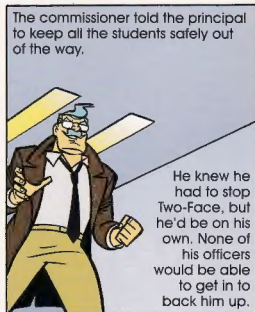
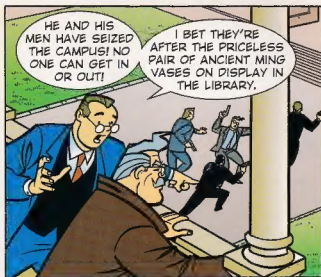
WHAT ON EARTH-?

RINGEE!!



PLEASE REMAIN IN YOUR SEATS. I'LL FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON.



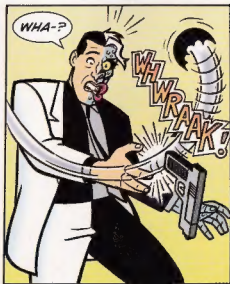


The principal's guess had been correct. Two-Face was indeed after the priceless vases on display in the library. The villain was fascinated by twins, pairs or any other form of the number two.

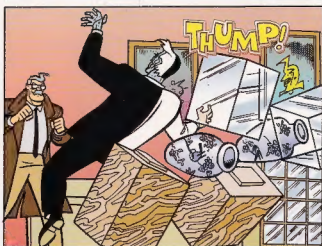


Two-Face had put guards at the library door.

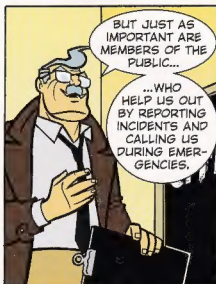
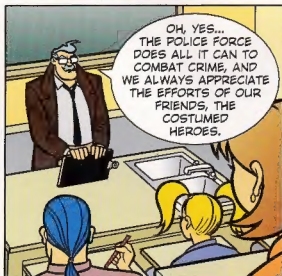




The commissioner wasn't sure who had deflected Two-Face's aim...but he knew he had to act fast.



Once the excitement was over, it was back to classes and lectures for the students.





THE PIED PIPER OF METROPOLIS



"Look, mum," cried an excited Tommy Hubbard, pulling at his mother's hand, "toys — and they're running around on their own!"

"That's nice, dear," his mother mumbled without thought. Halfway on board an overcrowded bus in mid-town Metropolis, tired and weighed down by bulging shopping bags, all Marion Hubbard wanted was to get home. She had hardly heard what her son had said.

"Look! LOOK!" Tommy insisted, and this time she looked. Marion Hubbard's jaw dropped at the sight that met her eyes. Moving towards the bus, in perfect two-by-two military-style formation, were twelve or more identical toy dolls.

Each doll was nearly one-foot tall, dressed in a sleeveless cardigan, with black trousers and a bright red bow tie. Each had a wide, fixed grin on their over-

sized heads. Despite their comical appearance, Marion shuddered. Something about them seemed wrong.

Before she could stop him, Tommy reached out to grab one of the toys as it trotted past. But the doll simply side-stepped neatly around his outstretched hand, before returning to its place in line with the others.

All over Metropolis people were greeted by the same bizarre sight. In Centennial Park, two joggers came to a full stop as a group of dolls joined them. Traffic on Main Street was brought to a standstill as more of the grinning figures quick-stepped across the road. Wide-eyed tourists snapped pictures as yet another squad cut purposefully across Union Square.

At the *Daily Planet*, workers gathered at the windows to watch as a

group of dolls, some forty strong, marched past below. Clark Kent, watching with them, lifted his glasses slightly so that he could take a better look.

His telescopic vision brought one of the dolls into sharp, magnified focus. He recognised the design immediately. Each was a perfect miniature version of his — or rather, Superman's — old enemy, the Toyman!

"What do you make of it, Clark?" asked staff photographer Jimmy Olsen, already snapping away. Getting no reply, he lowered his camera and turned. Clark was gone.

Below, a squad car pulled to a stop sideways across the road to block the advance of the tiny army. Inside, the two policemen looked at each other, uncertain exactly how to proceed.

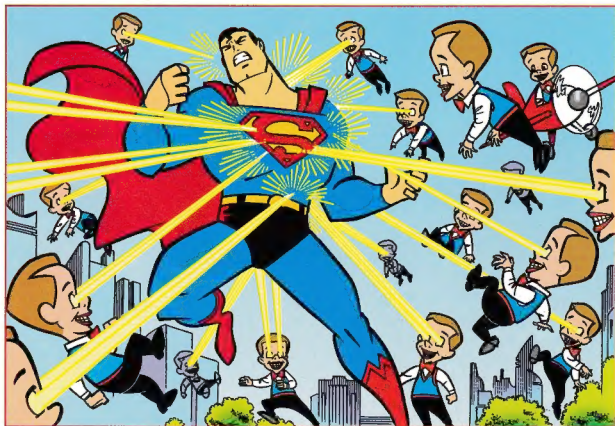
Thankfully for them, Superman arrived, descending majestically from

above. As soon as he realised the Toyman was involved, Clark had slipped away and changed into the Man of Steel.

The Toyman was Winslow Schott Jr., a bitter toy maker whose father had been wrongly jailed. Time and again Superman had foiled his warped plans for revenge, and in the process had become the Toyman's main target.

Superman knew one thing for sure. Regardless of the dolls' comical appearance, nothing that the Toyman did was in the least bit playful. To find out what dark secrets lurked behind their fixed grins, Superman used his X-ray vision to scan the approaching dolls.

The reaction was immediate and shocking. The nearest doll rose into the air, twin beams of fiery energy bursting from its eyes and striking Superman full on. One-by-one, the others followed suit, until Superman was surrounded, the dolls



blasting away at him.

Individually, the energy beams weren't strong enough to harm the Man of Steel. His super-strong Kryptonian body was resistant to all manner of explosions, impacts and assaults. But right now there were over fifty toys attacking Superman, and he was beginning to feel the effects of their barrage.

Worse still, some of the energy beams were being deflected wildly off his body and into the watching crowd. People started to scramble for cover and Superman realised that if he didn't act fast, innocent people could get seriously hurt.

Superman leapt into the air and the Toyman dolls followed. Deciding to fight fire with fire, he turned his heat vision on the two nearest dolls. Beams shot from Superman's eyes, and the dolls exploded with so much force, windows shattered in the buildings below!

As glass rained down towards the panicked spectators, a shocked Superman realised that the Toyman must have packed each doll with explosives.

A gust of superbreath swept the glass away from the crowd and out into the Metropolis river, but Superman knew his problems were only just beginning. He couldn't risk destroying the toys, and yet wherever he turned, more joined in the attack.

Like a swarm of over-sized insects, the toys stung

him with their energy beams again and again and again. The attacks were increasing in intensity — he had to stop them, and soon.

Suddenly it occurred to Superman that the Toyman himself must be somewhere nearby. He would want to follow the battle to see Superman's downfall for himself. To do that, the Toyman would need to be airborne.

Superman concentrated, screening out the ceaseless noise the energy beams made as they struck him. Soon his superhearing picked up the drone of a small aeroplane. Superman turned west, the dolls in pursuit.

Sure enough, there was the Toyman, piloting a single-seater toy

plane. On seeing Superman, the Toyman laughed delightedly. "Looking for this, Superman?" he asked, holding up a small remote control device. "If you want to stop the dolls, then you need to destroy it."

"Trouble is," the Toyman continued, "if you do that, or even *take* it from me, every doll will instantly detonate. There are hundreds of them all over Metropolis, you'd never manage to find them in time." The Toyman's plane did a mid-air victory roll. He'd won, and he knew it.

But Superman wasn't beaten yet. Looking down at the Metropolis River, a story his parents had told him as a child came back to him. In it, the people of Hamelin

employed a piper to rid them of the rats that plagued their village. The piper played his music all over town, luring the rats into the river.

Metropolis wasn't exactly infested with rats, but the idea was the same. As Superman hurtled down towards the city, he recalled that the dolls were first activated when he used his X-ray vision.

Sweeping the length and breadth of Metropolis, Superman let his X-ray vision play across and through every surface, penetrating the walls of the buildings and probing deep beneath the streets. Sure enough, in response, more and more dolls joined the pursuit.

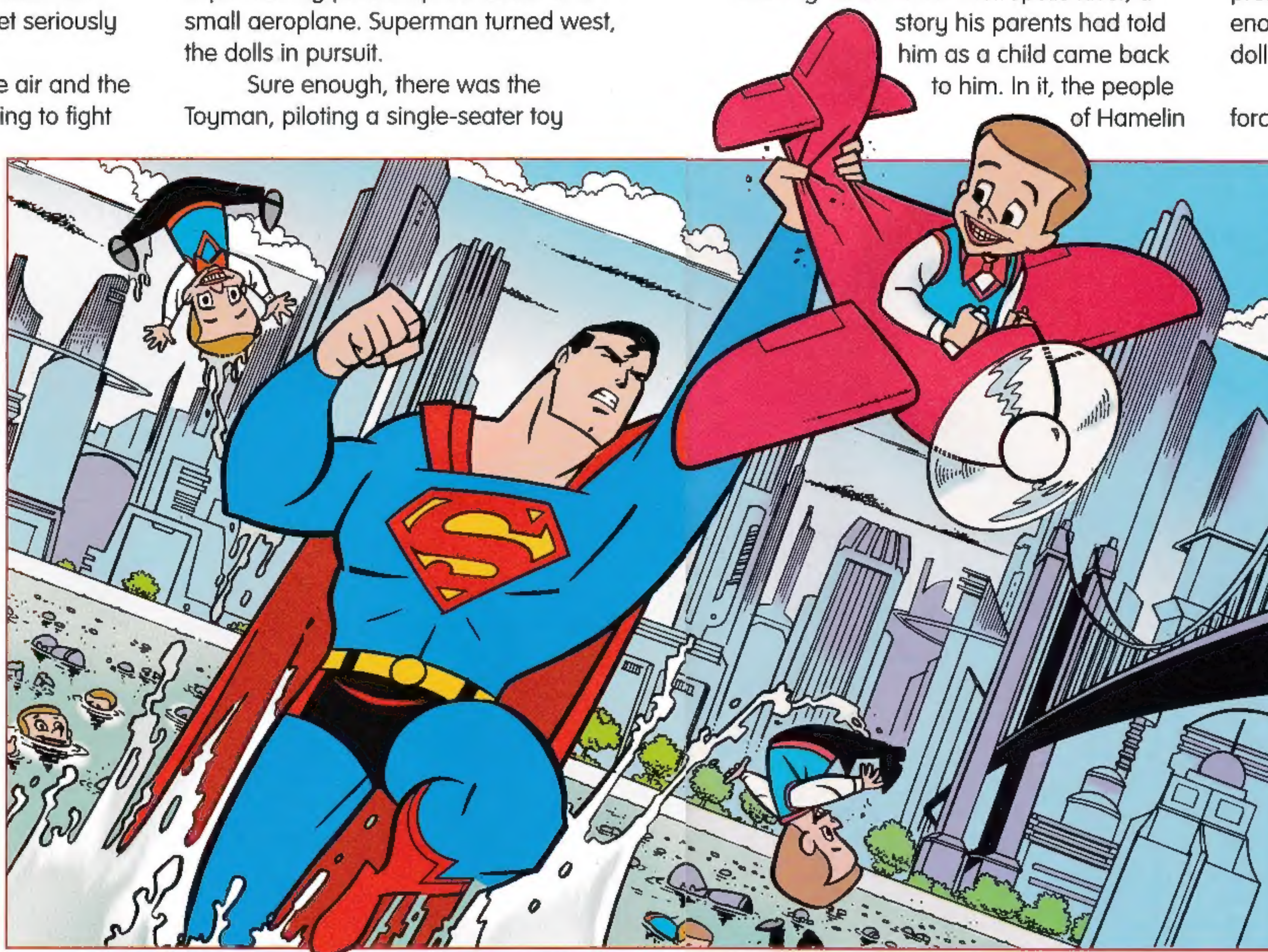
But as the number of dolls grew, the force of their energy beams increased.

Superman knew he couldn't take much more of this punishment, but he also knew he couldn't risk leaving even one doll in Metropolis. He had to get every one of them.

Finally, certain that he had accounted for all of the Toyman's deadly dolls, Superman headed for the river, and plunged deep into it. The dolls followed and, as Superman had hoped, the water shorted out their circuitry. Fizzing and crackling, the dolls floated to the surface, their threat ended.

Moments later, Superman burst from the river. He would return later to clear out the deactivated dolls, but first...

The Toyman stared in dismay as Superman took hold of his plane, steering it down towards the prison below. "It's high time," said Superman, "to put the Toyman... back in his box."



THE END 